

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A steam jet drum washing machine comprising:

5 a tub disposed in a casing and adapted so that wash water is supplied into the tub;

a drum rotatably mounted in the tub and adapted so that clothes are put in the drum and the wash water is supplied into the drum;

10 a water-supply unit disposed at one side of the tub for supplying the wash water into the tub and the drum; and

a steam generator connected to the water-supply unit for heating the wash water to obtain high-temperature and high-pressure steam, and supplying the high-temperature and high-pressure steam into the tub and the drum.

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2. The machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein the water-supply unit comprises:

20 a water-supply tube connected at one end thereof to the steam generator for supplying the wash water into the steam generator; and

a steam tube having one end connected to the steam generator and the other end disposed in the tub and the drum for supplying the steam into the tub and the drum.

25 3. The machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein the

water-supply unit comprises:

a water-supply valve assembly disposed at one end of the casing for supplying the wash water;

5 a detergent box assembly mounted between the water-supply valve assembly and the tub for storing a detergent;

a water-supply tube connected between the water-supply valve assembly and the steam generator;

an auxiliary water-supply tube connected between the water-supply valve assembly and the detergent box assembly;

10 and

a steam tube having one end connected to the steam generator and the other end disposed in the tub and the drum for supplying the steam into the tub and the drum.

15 4. The machine as set forth in claim 2, wherein the end of the steam tube disposed in the tub and the drum is formed in the shape of a nozzle.

20 5. The machine as set forth in claim 4, wherein the end of the steam tube penetrates through the upper end of a gasket for preventing leakage of water between the tub and the casing.

25 6. The machine as set forth in claim 2, wherein the steam generator comprises:

an airtight pressure container connected to the water-supply tube and the steam tube between the water-supply tube and the steam tube;

5 a heater mounted in the pressure container for heating the wash water stored in the pressure container;

an inlet valve disposed between the water-supply tube and the pressure container for supplying the wash water into the pressure container; and

10 an outlet valve disposed between the steam tube and the pressure container for supplying the steam into the steam tube.

7. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the steam generator further comprises a water level sensor for
15 sensing the amount of the wash water stored in the pressure container to control the operations of the inlet valve and the outlet valve.

8. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the
20 steam generator further comprises a temperature sensor for sensing the temperature inside the pressure container to control the operation of the heater on the basis of the temperature inside the pressure container.

25 9. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the

steam generator further comprises an automatic pressure switch for stopping the operation of the heater when the pressure inside the pressure container is over a predetermined pressure.

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10. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the steam generator further comprises an automatic temperature switch for stopping the operation of the heater when the temperature inside the pressure container is over a
10 predetermined temperature.

11. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the steam generator further comprises a thermal insulator for shielding the pressure container.

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12. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the pressure container comprises an upper container part forming the upper part of the pressure container, and a lower container part forming the lower part of the pressure
20 container, the upper container part and the lower container part being attached to each other.

13. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the inlet valve and the outlet valve are pressure valves that can
25 be opened or closed depending upon the pressure inside the

pressure container.

14. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the heater is horizontally disposed in the lower part of the pressure container so that the heater can be submerged under the wash water even when the wash water is supplied into the pressure container to the minimum water level.

15. The machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein the heater is an electric heater formed in the shape of a curved pipe.

16. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the steam generator is disposed above the tub between the tub and the casing.

17. The machine as set forth in claim 6, wherein the steam generator is disposed below the tub between the tub and the casing.